

little big things by Val-Creative

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Summary: Ever since she was little, Joyce wanted to be a mother to a daughter. If she had to be a mother at all. A little, bright-eyed girl she could teach to be prouder and louder than the boys.

little big things

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Ever since she was little, Joyce wanted to be a mother to a daughter.

(If she had to be a mother at all.)

A little, bright-eyed girl she could teach to be louder than the boys. To not be afraid to speak her mind while putting on her frills and bows.

Truthfully... and Joyce never admitted it... but she didn't trust Lonnie. Not around little girls.

Joyce eventually got her long-awaited separation from her ex-husband, taking her oldest son and youngest son with her. Years of neglect and gaslighting and abuse swept away with a divorce court order. Jonathan and Will have had enough misery.

She never expected a little, bright-eyed girl with superpowers. El got dropped into her lap, on multiple occasions, and Joyce made damn sure El landed comfortably. Right on her own two feet. Swept into Joyce's arms and knowing she was loved. Even when El gets into her twenties, she lies her head down in Joyce's lap, watching a mid-morning soap opera in undisguised fascination.

"What is that?" El murmurs, gazing curiously at the empty pill bottle between Joyce's fingers.

"My medication," Joyce replies, giving her a big, encouraging smile. "The doctor says my heart doesn't work as well as it used to." She doesn't want El to get worried. Jonathan already fusses about Joyce's pill-taking schedule and makes sure she remembers.

Instead of asking more questions, El lifts herself up, brushing off her dirt-speckled knees.

She peers over Joyce's blouse, narrowing her eyes into twin slits, and

— *no* — that's not what she's doing. Not really. A flutter of warmth pulses over Joyce's exposed skin, burrowing in, and making the slightest, softest tug within her chest. Joyce's eyebrows furrow.

She's about to ask El what's going on, when her adoptive daughter looks up, blinking, sniffing a dark run of blood from her right nostril.

"It works fine," El mumbles, dabbing her nose daintily with her fingertips. "There was a clog. I got rid of it."

A *what*?

"Oh..." Joyce breathes out, perplexed. She remains quiet, processing this as El jumps up, yanking the thick rubber-bands out of her braids. Fishtails. El quickly learned to brain her own hair, first practicing on Joyce and her dolls, and then herself.

"Can I take a bath, Mom?"

"Yes, of course," Joyce says, mouth pursing in contemplation. "Not too hot. You'll dry out your skin."

As El gleefully vanishes into the hallway, Joyce rubs over her collarbone, mentally planning a call to Dr. Foster.

Huh...

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Stranger Things isn't mine. Requested by anonymous user (AO3): "mother-daughter relationship between joyce and el." There's definitely not enough about El and Joyce family feels so I'm happy to do this! Thanks for reading and any comments/thoughts you guys had please share! I love hearing them!

((Want a request for Stranger Things? I'm doing 100-500 word drabbles of any friendship or romantic ship + any prompt until I feel like quitting. Rules: you need to comment here and provide a friendship or romantic ship and prompt. Please do not ask for anything with Billy Hargrove.

Thank you. The only requests I'll be looking at is if you ALSO commented about the fic you just read as well. It's only fair. You came to this fic to read it and me doing something for you later on is a sweet bonus!))